

PS 3545  
.H485 E3

1919

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00003264026







EAGLE QUILLS





# EAGLE    QUILLS

GEORGE FAUNCE WHITCOMB



THE CORNHILL COMPANY  
BOSTON

PS3545  
H485 E3  
1919

Copyright, 1919,  
by  
THE CORNHILL COMPANY

21

©Cl.A535907

NOV 25 1919



To  
M. L. W.



## CONTENTS

	Page
FRATERNITY . . . . .	I
THE WAYSIDE INN—1918 . . . . .	3
THE AVIATOR . . . . .	4
THE CROSS OF WAR . . . . .	5
BELGIUM . . . . .	7
JOAN OF ARC . . . . .	8
ALONE IN THE FOG . . . . .	10
HUMAN SEEDS . . . . .	11
LIFE . . . . .	12
THE MOULDER . . . . .	13
THE MASTER—? . . . . .	14
THINK NOT OF THE PAST . . . . .	15
INVOCATION . . . . .	16
WITHOUT INTERRUPTION . . . . .	17
AN ANSWER . . . . .	18
INSCRIPTION ON AN URN . . . . .	19
THE WOOING . . . . .	20
LIPS . . . . .	21
SMOKE . . . . .	22

# CONTENTS

	Page
MY CIGARETTE . . . . .	24
FALL . . . . .	25
THE GULL . . . . .	26
ANTS . . . . .	27
SING . . . . .	28
THE CROW . . . . .	29
A PHRASE . . . . .	30
A HEALTH . . . . .	31
TO YOU . . . . .	32
SOLITUDE	
<i>According to the Naturalist</i> . . . . .	33
<i>According to the Widow</i> . . . . .	34
<i>According to the Bachelor</i> . . . . .	35

EAGLE QUILLS



## FRATERNITY

As I lounged in my study yesternight,  
While the old-fashioned grate poured forth its heat,  
With restfully quiet embers alight,  
My weary eyelids closed as if to meet  
The future brotherhood of man.

Then, clear in frames of blood-stained, lifeless flesh,  
Appeared torn faces of war-crazed throngs  
Cursing, fighting, struggling, through barbed-wire  
mesh  
To gain their right to sing the song of songs,  
The righteous brotherhood of man.

And, in the background of the fiendish strife,  
Huddled together with babes at their breast,  
Lay starved, naked women, slashed by the knife  
Of the hellish foe whose tortures attest  
They scorn the brotherhood of man.

Then a burst of light outlining a star  
Shone into my aching soul like a sword,  
Bearing this message of strength from afar—  
“Strive unto death to make the barb’rous horde  
Respect the brotherhood of man.”



## EAGLE QUILLS

The bitter cold of the morn awoke me,—  
Yet the joy of seeing God's beck'ning light  
Fired my veins, and the ling'ring memory  
Of the Bethlehem Star urged me to fight  
To save the brotherhood of man.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE WAYSIDE INN—1918

One last visit to Sudbury town,  
To that inn where once were told  
Tales by men of great renown,  
And history was handed down.

The cranes were swinging as of yore,  
O'er hearts begrimed with soot;  
Still burn the huge logs, and the floor  
Still creaks as guests come through the door.

Of stalwart men in buff and blue  
We still leave memory,  
And in their stead have come to view  
Sons of their sons in khaki hue.

The old, old spirit still holds sway—  
The long hard fight to make men free;  
The old-time yearning for the fray  
Still quickens hearts of men to-day.

Farewell then, old inn, for a spell,  
I am off to join the ranks!  
Some day I may come back and tell  
Great tales myself—if not—farewell.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE AVIATOR

Strong youth he was, still in his 'teens,  
When war clouds rumbled from on high,  
And pondering deeply what best means  
To serve his land—he chose to fly.  
Forthwith he gave his mind and strength  
To train acutely ear and eye—  
That he might prove his worth at length  
And win distinction in the sky.

Each day he strove with all his might;  
Each night, when tests were done, he'd lie  
Awake with planning every flight  
Which he on future days would try—  
For those were times when each man's fight  
Must be swoop down low, then ply  
The foe with tools of death and night—  
To win distinction in the sky.

But ere his training was complete  
A changing current rushing by—  
An instant flare of scorching heat—  
Engulfed his plane with whirring sigh,  
Swift to the earth, in pain he fell,  
But he uttered neither pain nor cry—  
The stars mayhap have heard his knell—  
Who won distinction in the sky.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE CROSS OF WAR

1913.

Unto his cheerful homestead comes  
The young member of Parliament;  
A happy chap who always hums  
His home-song, where his love is spent  
Ah, light of the civilized world.

1914.

Unto the lonely homestead comes  
A weeping wife with children three—  
Her husband has followed the drums  
Of his regiment over the sea.  
Ah, slight of the civilized world.

1915.

Unto the anxious household came  
A message of the absent one.  
With sobs 'twas read, her husband's name  
Was there—"fell fighting at his gun."  
Ah, plight of the civilized world.

## EAGLE QUILLS

1916.

Unto the cheerless household came  
A tiny box with medal red,  
Proclaiming loud its owner's fame—  
What recompense for loved one dead!  
Ah, blight of the civilized world.

1917.

Unto the saddened household came  
A message from a younger land;  
"Have faith, we come to save your name,  
We come to lend a helping hand."  
Ah, fight of the civilized world.

1918.

Unto the waiting household comes  
The joyous peal of victory;  
Peace and rest are brought by the drums  
Of the men from over the sea.  
Ah, might of the civilized world.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### BELGIUM

If you had a sister, and, while she slept  
A hideous monster silently crept  
    Up beside her to quench his vicious thirst;  
    And, being repulsed, his passion was nursed  
To fury—he slashed her white neck across,  
A dastardly gash with a crimson gloss;  
    Then dipped his foul hands in the sanguine flow  
    And wiped them upon her soft tresses—so;  
If you had a sister—you have indeed—  
Belgium—the victim of Autocracy—  
    What would you do—what will you do—we want  
        to see!

## EAGLE QUILLS

### JOAN OF ARC

*(From the French of Alfred de Musset)*

#### RECITATION

In vain I seek the rest I lack,  
My heart is filled with the sorrow of France.  
Even from this drear spot of death-like trance  
My loved land's grief would draw me back.

#### CHANT

Sullen forest, retreat so aloof,  
Silent witness of such secret spleen,  
From my sight at least hide the dark proof  
Of my country's shame—its wretched scene.  
O saddened boughs, should we fail in the fight,  
Conceal with thy branches my father's roof—  
Perhaps I shall not see him again.

#### RECITATION

Quiet pervades the valley.  
The nightingale begins to rally  
His songs of sorrow and love.  
Already on the flowers descends  
The daylight from above.



## EAGLE QUILLS

What is the noise so loud and shrill?  
It is the bugle here beside our walls,  
I see the strange flag which rises and falls,  
Defiant on yonder hill.

### CHANT

Have you forsaken us this day,  
Guardian angels of our country?  
Have pity, if God does not see—  
If he remembers, save us, pray.  
I thought I felt the whole earth jar,  
I thought the sky began to sway,  
And in a ray of light from afar  
A voice from the wood bidding me stay,  
It was not human, it was not mine.  
Mother of Christ, was it Thine?  
Didst Thou pity the tears that fell from my eyes?  
It was the Holy Ghost did fill me.  
I felt the forceful smart  
Of an avenging Deity  
Descend into my heart—  
In war.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### ALONE IN THE FOG

Do you ever like to walk through a night  
When the fog is dense and the rain  
Pours down in clouds from skies insane  
While all the world sleeps, devoid of sight?

Alone you wander, while the dampness bites  
Clear into your lungs till they ache;  
Cutting membrane each breath you take;  
Yet deep in your soul burn sensitive lights.

Bright fires are kindled that heat up thought's sword  
With which you dissect each being  
Who blindly on earth tries keying  
His soul to the pitch of Infinite chord.

Religion so cold, all routine and fear;  
Then commerce which varies each week;  
Oft changing the bold to the meek;  
And mothers' fond hopes, then suff'ring each year.

Plainly you see the struggles and tangles  
Of women and men, mortal knaves,  
Yearning to reach, merely as slaves,  
The Land of Exemption from wrangles.

Thus the whole world revolves—every cog  
Before your eyes—a wretched view.  
If you believe these facts untrue—  
Walk abroad some night, alone, in the fog!

## EAGLE QUILLS

### HUMAN SEEDS

We are all judged by our deeds,  
Be they small or great;  
For by them we plant the seeds  
Which are fondly nursed by Fate.

So, like the plant, we mortals  
Arise from the deep abyss,  
Then open wide the portals  
Unsealed by a mother's kiss.

Into the world we wander  
Marveling at awesome sights,  
Then when it darkens yonder  
Return from the dizzy heights.

Soon come the storms upon us,  
And to stand the hardest blows  
We pray our God to shield us—  
To protect us from Life's snows.

Storms in the form of sorrow,  
And storms in the form of woe,  
But sunshine on the morrow  
Warms each weary heart below.

So straighten up, my brothers,  
Remember to whine is wrong;  
Come dry your eyes, dear mothers,  
And cheer the world with your song.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### LIFE

A cupful of thankful tears at your birth;  
A cupful of loving smiles through your youth;  
A cupful of hope when you're proving your worth,  
And a mother's blessing beside.

A cupful of courage when things look bleak;  
A cupful of prayer when you wander afar;  
A cupful of fear when your grip 's growing weak;  
And a mother's blessing beside.

A cupful of friendship while fortune reigns;  
A cupful of pain when you love;  
Then cupfuls of earth to hide your remains;  
And a mother's blessing beside.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE MOULDER

Hark ye, mortals of earth, I am the crater  
    Within ev'ry soul, yet few really know  
That without my hot lava none would be greater  
    Than cold chunks of clay which never could grow.

There would not be book, nor legend, nor verse;  
    No great inventions, no bridges of steel;  
No dark tunnels, tall buildings, nor money's foul  
    curse—  
Yet these things exist for I live, I am real.

To some, I admit I'm more partial than others;  
    Bestowing on these the power to write;  
For babes, still unborn, I evolve loving mothers;  
    And some to perjure their souls I incite—  
    For behold—I AM THOUGHT.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE MASTER—?

The silhouette of man, behold,  
A shadow from an earthen mould;  
    Hard, ungrateful, yet a master  
Of all the world since days of old.

Arising slow from some consent  
Of love or passion violent  
    He thrives, nor pauses once to think  
He might have been an accident.

He straightway yearns to press the lips  
Of Fame, yet e'er she yields, she dips  
    His being in a seething cup  
Of Pride, and while he feels it, slips

The chair of Fortune from his side.  
His shame, thus moved, he tries to hide  
    Behind the veil of penitence  
And seeks to heal his wounded Pride.

The silhouette of man behold,  
A shadow from an earthen mould,  
    And, tho', a master of the world,  
He's ne'er one of himself till cold.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THINK NOT OF THE PAST

Happiness, though sublime, oft leads us far apace,  
Heedless of our duty to all the human race,  
    We spent such pleasant hours in revelries last night  
    The morrow we ignored which brought new cares  
        to light.

And thus one day was lost—it will not come again—  
What pity we could not have turned it all to gain.

So think not of the past, to-morrow has its hours,  
But mind you use them well, and open all your doors  
    Of kindness, bounty, joy for ev'ry one around  
    To share and glory in—let all their praise resound.  
'Tis sometimes just a word that changes their whole  
    life,  
And makes the weak ones stronger to carry on their  
    strife.



## EAGLE QUILLS

### INVOCATION

Thy eyes are passion's blue,  
    Yet soft and pure,  
Thy lips are crimson hue,  
    Thy mien demure.

Thou art my goddess fair.  
    Near thee I feel  
The warmth of virtue rare—  
    Thy holy seal.

I pray ere death to gain  
    The longed-for right  
To love thee and attain  
    Thy crown of light.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

My loved one has fallen asleep,  
Tired and full of care,  
So I quietly rise and creep  
Down to my favorite chair—  
Without interruption.

My pen and cigarettes are near,  
Waiting my coming it would seem,  
Waiting to woo a smile or tear,  
Or merely a fond dream—  
Without interruption.

Two hours, perchance, have thus passed by,  
When I hear a sound on the stair—  
A rustle of silk and a step so shy,  
Planning to take me unaware—  
Without interruption!

I pretend I do not hear her,  
But my heart beats happily,  
For my loved one's drawing nearer—  
How empty my life would be  
Without interruption!

# EAGLE QUILLS

## AN ANSWER

Distance holds perils past our ken,  
And letters are empty at best ;  
Won't you forget the trifles and then  
See how useless is all your unrest?

You should know by the love which I gave,  
Love growing stronger each day ;  
You should know by our love, so save  
Your tears, dear, save them I pray.

Distance holds perils past our ken  
And letters are but futile qualms ;  
Forgive my thoughtless errors and then  
Enfold me once more in your arms.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### INSCRIPTION ON AN URN

Marvelous mistress of love, you seemed  
Always to entrance anew  
With some sweet, subtle fancy which you dreamed  
And then by your art have made come true.

You bled my soul with your passion;  
You tore my heart strings away;  
Wretched enchantress, who didst fashion  
My whole life in your hands like clay.

And then, my Lythra, you left me,  
Not granting me one last fond proof  
Which my lone, aching heart, in mis'ry,  
Might hold as a love-balm aloof.

But I knew the cling of your kisses;  
I knew your surrender divine;—  
Now I know how the wand'rer misses  
In the desert a flask of wine.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE WOOING

A tiny sunbeam from above  
Tripped gaily on his toes  
Down to earth with shining light  
To woo a little rose.  
She sweetly nodded to his plea,  
Then shyly did disclose  
Her tender bloom for his delight,  
O, happy little rose.  
She learned the warmth of burning love,  
And when her strength was spent,  
Her petals closed, she died content,  
Oh, happy little rose.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### LIPS

Lips,  
Scarlet lips,  
Moist with passion  
Mocking lines without compassion,  
Outstanding veins throbbing the while  
Beck'ning, then repulsing with ironic smile ;  
Sensitively rubbed to the point of bleeding  
By the heated sand-paper of Lust, unheeding  
All quenching coolness of mad desire's too sudden reeling.  
Never passes the light of day but that feeling  
Of diredread hovers maliciously before my mind  
No eyes glaring, and no form outlined.  
To whom or to what belong  
Those damnable lips of wrong  
Haunting yet adoring me  
To Fame maybe  
Or to—  
Death.

# EAGLE QUILLS

## SMOKE

### BACHELOR DIALOGUE

JAY: So you're going to marry to-morrow, eh?  
Something quite sudden, you decided to-day?  
Let me in on the secret, what's her name?

PAUL: Myrrha Barton of Grand Opera fame.  
By Jove, she's wonderful, old man . . . I say  
Got anything to smoke? . . . I'll tell you all  
About her.

JAY: I've a pipe I bought last Fall.  
Broke it in, smoked it till it got mellow;  
Sorry I've got nothing better, old fellow.  
Here, if you like it, keep it . . . not at all.

PAUL: Well, to begin with I met her . . . a light?  
Thanks, not a bad taste . . . I met her one night  
At a dinner in the usual way;  
One of Fred's gala affairs, you know . . . Jay,  
Why stare at me . . . are you ill?

JAY: I'm all right.  
Only it's funny. Let's see what was . . . when?  
In October. That's it. I see . . . and then—  
Go ahead.



## EAGLE QUILLS

PAUL:                   What's the idea of joking?

JAY:    Nothing, only the pipe you are smoking  
          Was bought late that same night, and smoked  
          again  
          But last evening . . . here in this very room.

PAUL: For God's sake, old man, you look like a tomb.  
       What's up?

JAY:                   You're my very best friend, aren't you?

PAUL: Yes.

JAY: Well, that pipe you are smoking, can't you  
       See? . . . BURNED out . . cold ashes for a  
       bridegroom.  
       Here, take a bit of brandy, Paul.

PAUL:   Thanks, thanks.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### MY CIGARETTE

When my deeply wearied soul  
    Grows tired of Life's monotony,  
When my brain disputes control,  
    And all my nerves start mutiny—  
        I light a cigarette,  
        A quiet cigarette,  
A soothing, soulful, sleepy thing.

When pleasures crown my day,  
    When my heart is filled with bliss,  
I turn from some enchanting lay,  
    I leave fond arms and glowing kiss  
        To light a cigarette,  
        A joyous cigarette,  
A wondrous, warming, wistful thing.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### FALL

Cold gleaming moon with biting ray,  
Bright algid star with steel-blue light,  
Proclaim fond summer's heated play  
Has ceased its round of warm delight.

Autumnal hue of limb and bough  
Long since has lost its dying charm;  
No more do farmers guide the plow,  
Nor lovers loiter arm in arm.

And thus at this time ev'ry year,  
The dread of winter fills the mind,  
For howling blasts will soon appear  
To chill the souls of all mankind.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE GULL

White 'gainst the black horizon of the sea,  
Loom the arched wings of the gull  
In solitary flight o'er dull  
Wet lashings of the cold, forbidding sea.  
Over rocks where many a hull  
Is crashed, and many a skull  
Of sailing man is cast up by the sea.  
Swift he flies, through the tempest's lull,  
To his nest where the mother gull,  
Waits with her young for the food snatched from the  
sea.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### ANTS

Most men are like ants, drudging through life,  
Their nose to the grindstone, edging Self's knife;  
Far happier they'd be to give and to claim  
The wealth of thought than the lucre of strife.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### SING

Sing happily, ye bards, of coming spring,  
It lingers but a moment ere it flies—  
So love it when ye may, for ye who sing  
May not be living when the new Spring cries.

## EAGLE QUILLS

### THE CROW

What creature is uglier than a crow,  
With body black as death and hideous beak,  
That shapes the harshness of its preying shriek,  
Shrilling through the air when the sun is low?  
But—did you ever hear the love-note of the crow?

## EAGLE QUILLS

### A PHRASE

A fleeting phrase, I try to clasp  
Ere it passes from my mind,  
But free, it struggles from my grasp,  
Leaving not a trace behind—  
Is not life just such a blind?



## EAGLE QUILLS

### A HEALTH

Here's a health to those we love,  
And the same to those we hate;  
May the sunbeams from above  
Shine alike on friend and foe;  
For when we hear the voice of Fate,  
Side by side we all must go.

# EAGLE QUILLS

## TO YOU

Along with the knocks, my friend,  
Snatch brief pleasures too—  
For when Life is at an end,  
You'll just lie down and say,  
"I'm through."

# EAGLE QUILLS

## SOLITUDE

ACCORDING TO THE NATURALIST

The air grows chill, each wintry cloud  
Descending slowly from its lofty berth,  
Lets fall white, snowy flakes to warm the earth  
And wind it tight in crystal shroud.  
Each growing plant has lost its bloom;  
The birds, forewarned, in haste, have flown away;  
While ev'ry insect, snake and beast of prey  
Has crept to its hibernal tomb.



# EAGLE QUILLS

## SOLITUDE

ACCORDING TO THE WIDOW

Rebellious burns my candle flame,  
As if fatigued from burning far too long  
In vain attempt to cheer me with its song  
And hints of dreams I dare not name.  
I would that I were made of wax,  
Then when my outer self, as now, burns low,  
My inner cord of flame, called soul, might flow  
To him as dreams in sleep relax.

# EAGLE QUILLS

## SOLITUDE

ACCORDING TO THE BACHELOR

Each midnight hour I pass alone  
Within my stately chamber huge and bleak;  
No warmth glows in my heart, my spirit meek  
Longs for the things it does not own,  
Fair simple things it holds most dear;  
Not jewels, not fame, nor bright gold unblest;  
But a little son at his mother's breast  
And a life at last sincere.











JAN 13 1989

